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THE FINANCING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Report by the Board of Governors

1. In 1990, the General Conference, by resolution GC(XXXIV)/RES/539, requested the Board of Governors to report annually to it on the actions taken with regard to the implementation of its resolution GC(XXV)/RES/388, by which the Conference in 1981 requested the Board to:

(a) take the necessary measures so that technical assistance is funded through the Regular Budget of the Agency or through other comparably predictable and assured resources,

(b) take appropriate steps so that technical assistance funds are increased in order to respond adequately to meet increasing financial requirements for the maximum possible number of technically sound projects and to enable progress in technical assistance to keep pace with the progress in other main activities of the Agency, and

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(c) report to the General Conference at its twenty-sixth regular session and annually thereafter on the actions taken with regard to the implementation of these requests and on the actions proposed for the following years.

2. At the meeting of the Board on 24 September 1990, following the close of the General Conference's thirty-fourth regular session, it was agreed that the Chairman of the Board would hold consultations on this matter and would report to the Board in due course.

3. An item entitled "The financing of technical assistance" was placed on the agenda for the Board's session in June 1991, when the Chairman of the Board reported on the consultations which he had held since the 1990 regular session of the General Conference.

4. The Chairman reported that, since Indicative Planning Figures to serve as a basis for fixing targets for voluntary contributions to the Technical Assistance and Co-operation Fund agreed upon in 1988 still covered the year 1992, the focus of his consultations this year had again been on the wider aspect of the terms of General Conference resolution GC(XXV)/RES/388, though the matter of IPFs for future years had also been raised by some members.

5. The Chairman also reported that his consultations had revealed no substantive change in the positions held by delegations as reported to the Conference last year.[1/] There were still those members who believed that the Agency's technical assistance and co-operation programme should be financed in whole or in part (at least 25 per cent of it) from the Regular Budget and those who were of the view that voluntary contributions should continue to be the basis for the programme. Also, the desirability of assured long-term financing for technical co-operation had continued to be stressed.

1/ See document GC(XXXIV)/922.

6. During the consultations, the establishment of an informal working group on the financing of technical assistance had been suggested. However, no proposals had been made for dealing in such a group with the possible interrelationship between the financing of technical assistance and the financing of safeguards in the light of the expected medium-term impact of ideas regarding (a) an expansion of the scope of the Agency's activities and (b) the balance between the Agency's regulatory and promotional activities.

7. With reference to these ideas, the view had been expressed that both technical assistance and safeguards might be financed partly (to the extent of 25-40 per cent) from the Regular Budget, the remaining resources for both being obtained through voluntary contributions. However, the view had also been expressed that, if safeguards attracted considerable voluntary contributions, such an arrangement could lead to a decrease in the total resources made available for technical assistance.

8. The Board's discussion confirmed the picture given by the Chairman of the Board in his report.

9. The Board agreed that, given the importance of the issues with which it would be faced in the next few years, it would intensify its efforts directed towards the implementation of General Conference resolution GC(XXV)/RES/388.

10. The summary record of the Board's discussion in June 1991 on the matter of technical assistance financing will be issued as an Addendum hereto.